The MEDICAL MISSIONARY

Boating in Kashmir

Vol. VI SEPTEMBER, 1933 No. 10

The MEDICAL MISSIONARY

Published with ecclesiastical approbation ten times a year by the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Inc., Brookland, Washington, D. C., in the interest of Medical Missions and Women of the Orient. Subscription, $1 per year.
Editor: Sr. M. Elizabeth. Telephone: Decatur 2687

"Entered as second-class matter September 11, 1928, at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879."

FATHER MATHIS

By The Very Reverend George J. Marr, C.S.C.

FATHER MICHAEL A. MATHIS, C.S.C., was born at South Bend, Ind., in 1885 and there attended the famous St. Joseph's Parochial School under the Sisters of Holy Cross. After a brief boyhood residence in Georgia and Lafayette, Ind., he entered the preparatory seminary of the Holy Cross Fathers at Notre Dame. During those blessed days at Holy Cross Seminary, he was a natural born leader in athletics and in dramatics as well as in his studies. He joined the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1905, pursued his classical studies and took his A.B. degree at Notre Dame with the class of 1910. He distinguished himself in his college days as a first-class debater, being a member of the Notre Dame debating team for several seasons. Frank Walker of the new Democratic administration and the late lamented Most Reverend George Finnigan, Bishop of Helena, were fellow students and teammates in beating Ohio State University. Father Mathis made his theological studies at Holy Cross College, Washington, D. C., and was ordained priest in 1914. From that year until 1922 he served as professor of Holy Scripture at Holy Cross College and found time to take his doctorate in sacred theology at the Catholic University in 1920, majoring in Holy Scripture under the brilliant Dr. Schumacher.

FATHER MATHIS

During these years as a young priest, professor, and deep student of Scripture, Father Mathis became interested in foreign missions and particularly in the field assigned to the Congregation of Holy Cross in far-off India. It is only the truth to say that he put Bengal and the Diocese of Dacca on the map for the Catholics of the United States. He formed the Holy Cross Mission society and began to appeal for men and women and money for the missions. He thought missions, talked missions, preached missions, wrote missions, dreamed missions. He founded *The Bengalese* in 1919 and was its first editor. He founded dozens of parish mission clubs and was the heart and soul of all of them. He put the foreign mission idea into the parochial schools and made it work. He founded and built the Foreign Mission Seminary at Washington in 1924 and was its energetic Rector till 1931. His zeal for the missions caused him to be selected by his higher superiors in 1922 as visitor to all the Holy Cross missions in India and again in 1928 as assistant to the Very Reverend Father General in this important work. He likewise traveled to Rome several times to plead for the missions.

In 1925 Father Mathis in his apostolic travels met Dr. Anna Dengel and since then has aided her in founding the Society of Medical Missionaries. Now in July, 1933, he has been chosen by his community to devote his entire time to promote the interests of this great work. Those who know the Pauline zeal of the learned, cultured and pious Father Mathis and his Pauline ability to fight and to suffer for the spread of the Kingdom of God, congratulate the Medical Missionaries. May the Holy Ghost bless them and their great promoter!

Promote Medical Missions by subscribing to "The Medical Missionary." Subscription, $1 a year. Address, "The Medical Missionary," Brookland, Washington, D. C.

European Subscriptions: 5/ a year. English Address: Mater Christi Medical Mission House, 98 Thornbury Rd., Osterley, London.

WASHINGTON

The news of the month which we take the greatest pleasure in announcing is that the Rev. Michael A. Mathis, C.S.C., has been relieved of the Directorship of the Foreign Mission Seminary of Holy Cross in order that he may devote all his time to assist and guide the growth of our Society of which he, with our Superior General, Dr. Anna Dengel, is co-founder. This was the answer to our many earnest prayers, and the Te Deum which we sang in the Chapel when word was received that they had been heard, is daily echoing in our hearts.

In order that our readers may have a little idea of what this means to us, we refer them to the above sketch of Father Mathis' life for which we acknowledge our indebtedness to the Very Reverend George Marr, C.S.C., Superior of the Holy Cross Foreign Mission Seminary.

EIGHT NEW NOVICES AND TWO NEW MEMBERS

The generosity of the Congregation of the Holy Cross to the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries has been boundless. From the beginning when Father Mathis aided Dr. Dengel in founding the Society, they have never spared themselves in caring for the Medical Missionaries' spiritual needs. They have put at the Society's service their most gifted teachers and preachers to give courses, spiritual conferences, and the services of a Chaplain. Added to the Fathers' untiring care and solicitude for the Society's spiritual and intellectual needs, and the Brothers' kindly help, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, both at the Bengalese and the Motherhouse at Notre Dame, have from the beginning most generously bestowed a mother's care on the infant community. The Congregation has not stopped at the borderline of necessity in the Society's regard, but their Christian charity and benevolence has helped it often to write "Feast Day" with capital letters.

All of this, however, was not enough. When they might with justice have said: "We have helped you launch your ship, now take the helm yourselves," they have given to the Society their best pilot, one who knows all the currents and all the rocks.

Therefore, the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries takes this opportunity to reiterate its gratitude to God for the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

August 15 marked another step forward in the annals of the Society when, after a Retreat of seven days conducted by the Very Rev. John B. Schlinkmann, S.D.S., 8 postulants received the garb of the Society and two novices made their first profession.

The simple but impressive ceremony was conducted by the Rev. M. Mathis, C.S.C., and assisted by the Very Rev. G. J. Marr, C.S.C., and Brother Liborius, C.S.C.

Father Marr preached a very simple, straightforward sermon to the prospective novices and members, showing them how in most cases God's chosen ones were failures in the eyes of the world. He took for his examples, Isaias, St. John the Baptist, and St. Paul, and pointed out the great generosity they had shown in the service of the Lord. In closing, Father Marr stressed the necessity for humility and obedience.

Those who received the garb were: Miss Marjorie White, who received the name of Sister M. Damien; Miss Elizabeth Deegan, who received the name of Sister M. Vincent; Miss Annie Novak, who received the name of Sister M. Magdalen; Miss Katharina Labonté, who received the name of Sister M. Catherine; Miss Josephine

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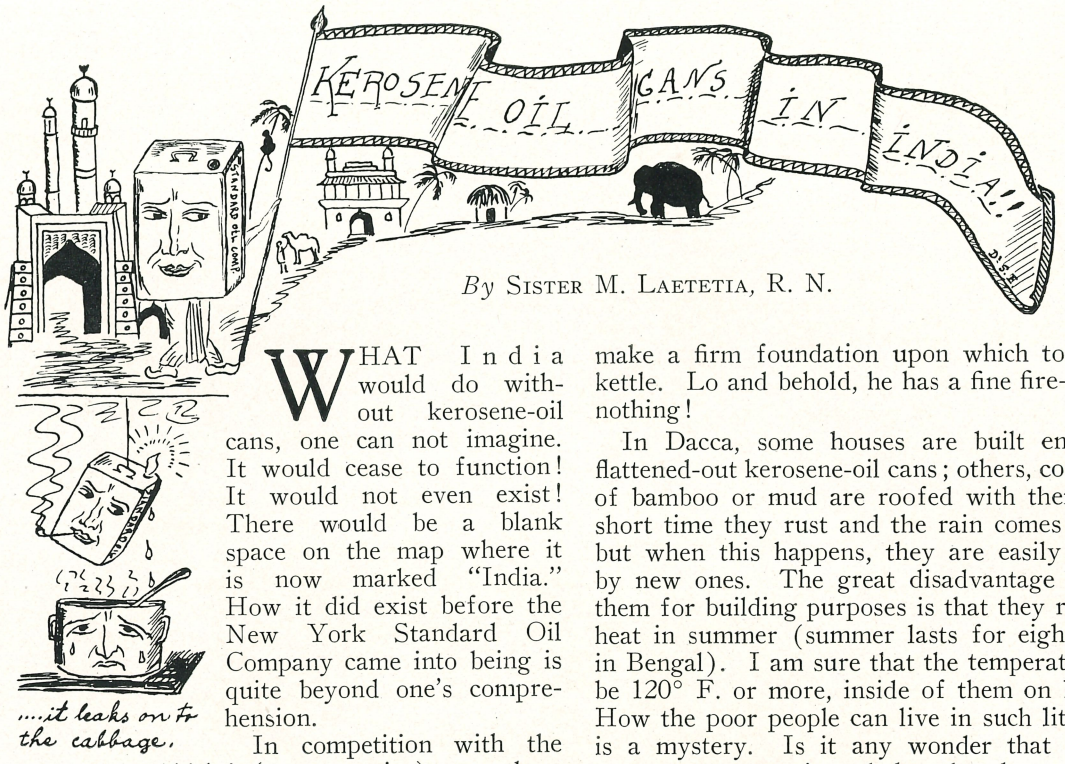

By SISTER M. LAETETIA, R. N.

WHAT India would do without kerosene-oil cans, one can not imagine. It would cease to function! It would not even exist! There would be a blank space on the map where it is now marked "India." How it did exist before the New York Standard Oil Company came into being is quite beyond one's comprehension.

In competition with the goat-skin, the bhishti (water-carrier) uses them to distribute his water supply to most of the homes of India which have no piped water supply, or no well. He receives the princely stipend of Rs 1/ per month for supplying either a goat-skin or a kerosene-oil can of water in the morning and again in the evening. In our Dacca hospital, we have all the plumbing fixtures. This is very nice, but they produce no water (which is not so nice), the pressure not being sufficiently strong. Our bhishti is old-fashioned and treats us (for our personal needs) with a few goat-skins of water per day (they are very few); but the servant, being new-fashioned, brings in the depths of winter a bath for four in a five-gallon kerosene-oil can.

"Why is this floor looking so dirty today?" one asks when visiting a hospital ward.

"Mem-sahib, the kerosene-oil can leaks, how can we wash the floor when we have nothing which holds water?" (Just another alibi for not washing the floor.)

Near the hospital is a dark, dreary, smoke-ridden place. This glories in the title: "Hindu tea-shop." Outside on a little wooden apology for a verandah is a fire-place on which the water is boiled for tea. Of what do you suppose the fire-place consists? Of a kerosene-oil can, of course! Somewhere down in its interior, the tea vendor has fixed a few bars to support the coals, and at the lower part of one side of the tin he has cut a hole through which he may remove the ashes and to afford a draught to make the fire burn. The top of the can, he has built up with mud to make a firm foundation upon which to rest the kettle. Lo and behold, he has a fine fire-place for nothing!

In Dacca, some houses are built entirely of flattened-out kerosene-oil cans; others, constructed of bamboo or mud are roofed with them. In a short time they rust and the rain comes through, but when this happens, they are easily replaced by new ones. The great disadvantage of using them for building purposes is that they reflect the heat in summer (summer lasts for eight months in Bengal). I am sure that the temperature must be 120° F. or more, inside of them on hot days. How the poor people can live in such little ovens is a mystery. Is it any wonder that the poor women are anaemic and that they have no desire to learn anything or to follow our directions for the care of their babies? If these poor things only knew enough to offer such awful hardships to God, what a tremendous store of merit they would gain for Heaven? How can we, four of us, teach them, when in the town of Dacca alone there are over one hundred thousand inhabitants? There is so much waiting to be done here——, but that is not kerosene-oil cans!

The silver-roofed temples gleam on the road to Kashmir, against a gorgeous background of vivid green. What is this silvery shining metal? Years ago, it was silver, but now,—kerosene-oil cans.

On the Hindu holiday (what an unholy day it is) thousands of gallons of paint contained in kerosene-oil cans are squirted on the passers-by from sprayers which, of course, are made from pieces of the cans.

Another very useful article made from the famous kerosene-oil cans is a little lamp which smokes like Vesuvius on a busy day. This is used in all the poor homes of Dacca. Our cook, too, indulges in one in our kitchen. His lamp sometimes leaks on to the cabbage!

Kerosene-oil cans, in wholes or halves, make good flower pots for young shrubs or flowers on the verandah. If they are painted up a little they are very useful containers for flowers or trees in the Chapel. Our nurses in Pindi clean them out and use them for storing rice, flour, dal, water, etc. Although they make wonderful containers for rubbish, the mali (gardener) thinks they are

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DR. AGNES McLAREN (1837-1913)

(NOTE—This is the continuation of the abridged translation from the French of the life of Dr. Agnes McLaren, the great pioneer doctor who initiated Catholic Medical Mission Work in the Punjab.)

Synopsis: Dr. Agnes McLaren was the daughter of Duncan McLaren, a Presbyterian, one of the foremost citizens of Edinburgh, and of Priscilla Bright, a Quaker. As a young girl, Agnes was a devoted friend of the poor. At the age of 37 she went to Montpellier to study at the University to become a doctor. She first practiced medicine in Cannes. After making a retreat, annually, for 20 years under the direction of a Catholic priest, Agnes McLaren finally embraced the Catholic Faith in 1898. A little later, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic. In the foregoing chapter, she initiated her first missionary project and at the age of 72 went out to Rawalpindi, India, where, with ecclesiastical approval, she started a fully-equipped hospital and several dispensaries.

AS soon as Agnes had returned to France, she visited the Superiors of various girls' boarding schools with the idea of finding young girls who would be willing to study to become doctors in order to devote their lives to missionary work. Many of the Superiors said to her: "We can do nothing. Parents would object to this kind of a vocation. One must either be a religious or a woman of the world." Besides these objections, could there be found young girls, society ladies who could or would complete the course of medical studies, take the examinations and after the Doctorate, say good-bye to liberty and to the comforts of the world, to give their lives to the service of a hospital? What contract, what promise, would protect the volunteer doctors and their work against fatigue, regrets and the tempting reminiscences of the world?

AT PARTING

Yes, there will come a day when, standing
Upon the brink of time,
I shall half turn, reluctantly,
To wave adieu—to see
The meadows starred with little flowers
We loved and touched in other hours;
And the hills we climbed with laughter . . .
And trees, and the shadows of trees . . .
And clouds, and the shadows of clouds . . .
And I shall feel the little breeze
That walks at dusk. . . .
But I shall wait until you pass
With eager footsteps o'er the grass.
Then, looking up, I shall see God
Through sudden tears,
And He will say: "Come! Follow Me
Beyond the years. . . ."

—Mary D. Thayer.

These objections were well founded, for in that same hospital of Rawalpindi Dr. McLaren had the sad experience of seeing one doctor, after being a short time in service, break her agreement and return to the world. It was disheartening for Agnes to realize that she was mistaken in believing that the world was peopled with souls as heroically self-sacrificing as herself. Then she turned her thoughts towards the religious orders. There, at least, there would be a directing force binding on all. There, would be the spirit of perseverance and self-sacrifice—indispensable adjuncts to the work. Fresh objections, however, sprang up.

"What is this strange novelty in the Church?" they asked, "so conservative by tradition?"

"It is true," she would answer "and the Church is right, but, what does the Church want to do: provide for the needs of souls? Is it wrong to provide new remedies for new needs? It is right that the Church should suspect utopias, moderate the restless, examine plans, wait for results before passing judgment, but in the end she gives her blessing to all that helps in the salvation of souls. When St. Vincent de Paul founded the Daughters of Charity, how many people condemned his program? His answer was that the Daughters of Charity would have the home of the sick for their monastery, the sick room for a cell, the parish church for their chapel, the streets of the city or the wards of the hospital for a cloister, the fear of God would serve as a grille and holy modesty would be their veil."

Agnes first addressed a kind of questionnaire or referendum to the Superiors general of modern religious communities. To this, some gave a negative categoric answer, seeing nothing in the idea but a chimera; others, praised the end but alleged a want of suitable subjects in order to attain it, and some professed themselves as very favorable to the idea. One of these wrote:

"My sisters in charge of the clinics assist at all the operations and render the most intimate personal aid to the patients. We do not find that these tasks sully their religious nature, all being done in a spirit of obedience and chastity."

These same superiors, although quite favorable in theory, added: "Before accepting and studying the means of carrying out the plan, we must know what the Holy See thinks of it and what permissions it will grant. It is there that all Apostolic work and works of charity must look for guidance, blessing and sanction."

Agnes understood, perfectly, this attitude; so, placing her confidence in God, she turned her steps to Rome. There, she did not spare herself but made appeals on all sides, visited many Cardinals and in particular sought the influence of the Master General, Procurator General of the Dominicans and even went to His Holiness.

The letters in which she presented her statements and requests were not of the usual formal kind, solemn in tone, but were noted for their brevity, clearness and sincerity. They were

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HOW LITTLE INDIANS PLAY

HOW do Indian children play? Most of them don't; their childhood lasts such a short time because weddings take place very early in their lives. In spite of the many changes which optimists see in India, and I am sure they do exist—though we are rather off the beaten track—the little Mohammedan girls are still being married at ten years of age, in Dacca, and the first baby still opens its eyes while its little mother is herself only a child of twelve or fourteen years.

Even the few short hours remaining to them before their fate is sealed are replete with many hard tasks, leaving little time for play. In the poorer Mohammedan homes it is the duty of the little daughter of eight or ten years to fetch water. One sees her carrying an enormous (for such a little thing) water-pot on her small hip, sometimes quite a distance. When this duty is done, instead of a pretty doll (which every American child possesses) this little maiden must lug around a hugh baby for the rest of the day. Perhaps the baby is three or four years old, while she is only six, but that is of no consequence for what has been done for generations must continue!

THE YOUNG BUT EFFICIENT NURSE MEASURES OUT HER DOSES METICULOUSLY

Most of the children who have time to play love to play at keeping house. Grinding spices is a most entrancing occupation. They get a brick for the spice stone, a small piece of another brick for a roller, leaves from the nearest tree for the spices and then they grind for hours at a time.

One day I saw some of the ward orderlies' (coolies) children playing at a very absorbing game; they were carrying a very sick patient on a stretcher—the patient was a brick and the stretcher a piece of an old sack! Often it is a dispensary that I see which they have set up wherein the young but efficient nurse measures out her doses meticulously to her would-be sick companions.

On another day the sisters came across a cute little pair playing "wedding." The young lady (of five) had her hand tied to the bridegroom's hand by means of a corner of her sari. Together they were putting a cloth over their heads and looking into each other's eyes. These are two Hindu customs; if the little bride does not look into her bridegroom's eyes they have a superstition that their married life will not be happy. Can you imagine that in most cases it is the first time that they have really seen each other?

We had a dear little child in the hospital some time ago and she was so sweet and patient that I thought she deserved a toy. The only thing I could find was a big black elephant (baked-mud variety) with lovely blue ears, a golden back, and probably a pink tail; no self-respecting member of the elephant tribe would have owned him as a brother. The little patient also regarded it rather dubiously when I gave it to her, but said "nomashkar" at her mother's urging. (They were very simple, nice, village people.) Afterwards, I saw that the elephant was just standing on the floor under the bed. I wondered why, as most children would have liked it. However, several days later, the mother very quietly and respectfully came to me and said: "Sister mi-sahib, what was the elephant for? What are we to do with it?" On my replying that it was a toy for the child to play with, she looked very much astonished; she seemed to have no idea of a child playing with a toy. Nevertheless when they went home the elephant accompanied them and I am sure he has a place of honor in their home and is busy accumulating dust. That is what usually happens to toys in India; one sees them around, but the children are not playing with them, they are stuck up on something somewhere as ornaments.

Children are satisfied with very little. The smaller children, especially, are thrilled to procure a round baked-mud vessel which has a projection at one end, which is supposed to represent a chicken or a duck. They tie a piece of string around this and trundle it through the streets all day in a state approaching bliss (judging from the expression on their faces). I am sure, however, that they are very soon ruined; they are so poorly made.

The Dacca children have the best game of all: to chase the Sisters' "Baby Austen" as it enters

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DR. ELEANOR STERN TO LEAVE FOR INDIA

HARDLY had Dr. Eleanor Stern pronounced the words of the Mission Oath, promising for three years to go to any region or place whither her superior should command her, and to do the work assigned, when her readiness to fulfill her obligations was put to the test. She received her orders to go to India. She will sail from here shortly, and after a brief visit to her home in Hungary will sail for India from Genoa on September 25.

Dr. Stern was born in Szolnok, Hungary. After graduating from the gymnasium (which corresponds to our preparatory schools) she made her

DR. ELEANOR STERN

medical studies at the Ferencz Jozsef University at Szeged, graduating from there in 1929 with the highest honors. She practised for three years at the University Clinic for Mental and Nervous Diseases, where she distinguished herself. Her paper on Schizophrenia, published in the *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie* in 1933 (the German scientific paper on nervous diseases) is often referred to. Besides being quite a linguist, when the editor is sadly at a loss for an illustration for the magazine—*Voilà!* a clever little sketch is at her command.

The Society thanks God for the talents at its command, but it holds more dear, personal holiness and zeal for the medical mission apostolate. In all fairness to Dr. Eleanor Stern she gives great promise in those two respects.

We wish her Godspeed from our hearts and our prayers will be many and frequent and may we ask the same from our readers and perhaps just a little money to help her on her way. Please make checks payable to the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries.

LES FEMMES MEDECINS-MISSIONNAIRES

By Dr. Arlette Butavand

(Editions de l'Aucam, rue des Recollets, 8 Louvain)

This little book contains a very comprehensive study of the whole subject of the missionary woman doctor. First it gives a brief survey of the hygiene (or its lack) and the pathology found in the various mission countries, then the special medical task of women doctors in mission lands, the care of women and children. The need for this care is most keenly felt, Dr. Butavand remarks, among all Moslem women where purdah is observed, and in China, Africa, India, and all non-Christian countries where woman is looked on as man's inferior. She cites a very graphic incident to show the evils resulting from the lack of proper obstetrical care. As a reference book it is most useful, giving very complete statistics in regard to institutions, kinds, location, personnel, etc., under the administration of both Catholic and Protestant women doctors. Besides this it gives a brief history of the Catholic and Protestant missionary women doctors' movement. In treating of the work done by Catholic women in this field, Dr. Butavand has divided it into the work done by the Sisters, the Societies of Missionary Women Doctors, and the Lay Societies.

HOW LITTLE INDIANS PLAY

(*Continued from page* 6)

and leaves the gulies (lanes). How they scream! It is simply inferno let loose and they do it every time the car appears. The young villains have composed a little song for our especial benefit. Of this they never tire, although it has no meaning whatsoever, consisting of words put together to rhyme. As soon as they see us coming they cry out:

"Mem sahib very goot
Cheek na muttee biskoot."

M. L.

HARVEST

I must out to the harvest white; to the fields
full fair as May.
And all I ask is a high hope in my heart,
where a dream is hidden away.
I must out to the harvest, Lord, for I yearn
to reap for Thee.
Now give me souls and Thy thirst for souls,
and the suffering that may be.
Let perils come, and the blistering sun,
and "black death" grinning,
But a field white is a glad sight—aye and
a prize worth winning.

Patna Mission Letter.

KEROSENE-OIL CANS IN INDIA

(*Continued from page* 4)

the only thing for watering the garden. Then if one has no more use for them, they can be sold for the large sum of four annas a piece (8 cents) or, if one is a good bargainer, for four and one-half annas.

All day long one is reminded of New York, for from morning till night, one sees the whole or a part of the name stamped on a piece of tin, here, there, and everywhere. Having lived in New York for several years and having one's family still there, it is really too bad that the only thing which can remind a poor missionary in a distant land of home is a kerosene-oil can.

AGNES McLAREN

(*Continued from page* 5)

respectful, without being flattering, and were animated with a breath of faith and zeal which gained for her the esteem of all. Below is an example. This letter was addressed to the Secretary of the Holy Congregation of Religious, and dated May 11, 1912.

Monastero Cenacolo,
72 Via Stamperia,
May 11.

Excellence:

I have just had my letter to you copied by the machine, thinking it would be easier for you to read it than in my bad handwriting and I thought you might wish to refer to it for information as to what nuns do in France and without any injury to their delicacy—I have marked the Abbe Perra's opinion.

I am glad to have the opportunity of seeing your Excellence before Ascension as it was at this time that Our Lord gave the Commandment: "Preach the gospel to every creature," and the only way to reach many women in India is to send them *medical women.*

With great respect, Excellence,

AGNES MCLAREN.

All of these visits and petitions received in so friendly a manner, led to nothing. Nor up to then had the religious orders which were favorable to the plan, taken a single step towards formal approbation by the Holy See. Without being discouraged, Agnes made five journeys to Rome in the years 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, and 1912, always choosing the most favorable times for her visits. On one occasion, in order to meet a Vicar Apostolic whose help she wished to enlist, she left her home just as she was expecting the arrival of some of her near relatives. "What will they do," asked a friend, "since you have not time to warn them of your departure in order that they may postpone their visit?" "Certainly, they will be disappointed," she answered, "but what can I do, God's work comes first?"

After her fifth visit to Rome, Agnes departed leaving her idea as it were buried in the earth, but with the hope that it would spring up one day like the little grain of wheat in the Gospel—in the time and manner known to God alone. She returned to France to the house which she had chosen some time before, in Antibes. This was a quieter place than Cannes and more suitable to her failing health.

(*To be continued*)

THE SOCIETY AT HOME AND ABROAD

(*Continued from page* 3)

Donovan, who received the name of Sister M. John; Miss Liesel Reinhartz, who received the name of Sister M. Rita; Miss Ellen Gavigan, who received the name of Sister M. Lourdes; and Miss Grace Bernadt, who received the name Sister M. Aloysia.

Those who made their first profession and received the crucifix were: Sister M. Elizabeth Dwight, of Boston, a graduate of the Simmons College School of Social Work and of the Boston School of Physical Education and a trained physio-therapist; and Dr. Eleanor Stern, of Szolnok, Hungary, a graduate of the Ferencz Jozsef University Medical School, of Szeged, Hungary.

Mother Mary Dorothea, of the Little Company of Mary, Evergreen Park, Chicago, was present, having come on especially to see her sister, Sister M. Elizabeth, make her profession. She was accompanied by Mother Callista, of the Little Company of Mary.

Sister M. Alma and Sister M. Leonie attended the Eighth National Crusade Convention which was held this year at Cincinnati from August 8 to 11. They took charge of our Society's exhibit. In her brief summary of it, Sister Leonie says:

"It was the first time that the students gathered in the city where the movement's headquarters, Crusade Castle, are sheltered. Bishop Schrembs, of Cleveland, in the opening meeting, Tuesday, in accordance with the slogan of the convention which was : 'forward with courage and faith,' established a historical parallel between the crusades of medieval times for the rescue of the Holy Land and the modern movement of Catholic American youth to spread the Kingdom of Christ. This slogan was repeated again on Wednesday in the 'Mission Night' Program when Bishop James Anthony Walsh, Superior-General of the Maryknoll Missionaries, spoke on the major problems in the foreign mission field. Other eminent speakers were: Bishop Emmet Michael Walsh, head of the Diocese of Charleston, S. C.; Archbishop John T. McNicholas, of Cincinnati, President of the Crusade, and Msgr. William Quinn, National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

"The students were given ample opportunity to be convinced that in matters concerning missions, courage and faith were necessary qualities for the workers in the field and the helpers at home. Talks to veteran missionaries, some of whom had labored long and under many difficulties in the mission fields, visits to the various instructive missionary exhibits showing the work the missionaries do and their problems in regard to superstitions, strange habits, and incomprehensible customs,—all helped to bring home to the Crusaders the idea that a real Crusade spirit is necessary for those who labor to establish the Kingdom of Christ in the soul of the heathen.

"The conferences on special fields and phases of the foreign and home missions, which followed the principal addresses of the programs Wednesday and Thursday nights, were well attended and provided animated discussions lasting until nearly 11 o'clock. Practically every angle of the Church's missionary program was covered in these conferences."

May the Crusaders go forward with courage and faith in the good cause of the missions and may they do so with the same enthusiasm and zeal as was displayed at this Eighth National Convention.